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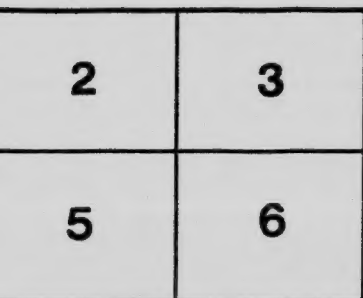
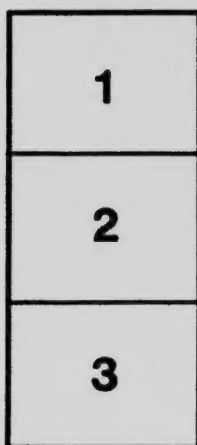
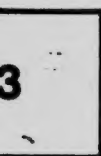
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Animal Husbandry Department.

Some Facts About Sheep

The fact that there is a decided shortage of sheep in Manitoba is one that is well recognized by farmers, live stock dealers and butchers alike. No evidence is required to prove it here, nor does one need to search long for reasons which are commonly given to account for the almost total absence of sheep from the Province. They are few in number. First, because of heavy losses that have been experienced by wolves destroying the lambs in those districts where wolves are common; second, because of the cost and labor in fencing farms for sheep; third, the price of western wool is not attractive to many farmers.

On the other hand, there is decidedly another side to the sheep question.

Do you know that while these old worn-out reasons for not growing sheep are being repeated, there was imported into Western Canada during 1910, 11,000,000 pounds of mutton? This with a value of, practically speaking, \$1,500,000. A large percentage of this was Australian mutton imported to British Columbia. About 3,000,000 pounds of it, however, was brought to Winnipeg from the East and South. This with a value of at least \$350,000.

Do you know that the money for the mutton shipped to Winnipeg is being sent out of the Province when it should be paid to Manitoba farmers? Is there any reason why Australia instead of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta should supply mutton to British Columbia?

Do you know also that the farmers in the East and South are producing this mutton at a profit or they would not continue to grow it?

Do you know that the dealers in Winnipeg would much prefer to secure this mutton in the live form on the local market, thus enabling them to offer a better product to the people?

Do you know that they are offering you for live sheep the equivalent of what this frozen mutton costs them in the East plus the freight on it? If eastern farmers on their high-priced land can produce mutton to be shipped west at a profit, surely some mutton can be grown in the west at a still greater profit.

Following are some of the reasons why. Read them and decide for yourself:—

- 1.—Wolves are now becoming very scarce in most of the older settled districts at least (where sheep are most needed), and seldom are losses from them experienced by sheep growers.

2. Farmers are beginning to need to fence their farms anyway, and it costs but little more in money and labor to fence a part of the farm, at least, for sheep than to fence for horses and cattle only.

3. The price of western wool is slightly on the increase, and the farmer can count on at least 9 to 10 cents per pound for unwashed wool, so that the average ewe shearing six to eight pounds of wool will pay for one-half her keep at least in wool.

4. The climate, soil and feeds produced in Manitoba are in nearly every way equal to, and in some respects better suited to mutton production than are the same factors in either the East or the South. What Manitoba lacks in length of grazing season it more than makes up in healthfulness of climate. The foot rot and internal parasites, so common in sheep in the East and South, are practically unknown to sheep in Manitoba.

5. Sheep require less care and can be sheltered in winter more cheaply than any other type of farm animal.

6. There is another side to this sheep question demanding consideration from the farmers. The time is at hand, so those who have been growing wheat on the same land for many years tell us, when the land is no longer producing profitable crops of wheat. A system of crop rotation and the use of manure is becoming necessary. In any system of crop rotation that will benefit the land some crops will be grown that do not have a satisfactory direct marketable value, such as alfalfa, clover, field peas and beans, corn, hay and root crops. The greatest profit can only be derived from these crops by feeding them and marketing in the form of finished animals. No more profitable means of disposing of a lot of rough cheap feed can be found than to feed it to a flock of good sheep. There is always on almost any farm a quantity of rough feed suited to no other purpose that can be turned into money by the sheep route.

7. Sheep, if kept in sufficient numbers, have a direct value to the farmer as weed destroyers. Sheep will eat practically every weed that grows. They will fatten on green weeds in summer and from weed seeds from elevator screenings in winter. They can be pastured on weedy summer fallows in the spring, on weedy portions of grain fields in summer and on weedy stubble fields in the fall, and thus kept destroying noxious weeds the entire summer.

8. There is one more characteristic of sheep that should appeal to most farmers. It is the desirability of mutton as meat for the table and its suitability to use on the farm in summer. The keeping of a few sheep is another means of helping to solve the fresh meat problem in summer. No meat is more palatable than is fresh roast lamb at from three to six months old. A lamb or even an older sheep can be slaughtered and used entirely on most farms before it has time to spoil. Particularly is this true in harvesting or threshing time, when there are a number of hands to board.

In districts, then, where wolves are no longer troublesome, as is the case in many localities, and you are beginning to fence your farms anyway, why not, farmers, fence a portion of the farm for sheep and give them a trial? You will find they will require less care than any other of your farm animals; you will find they will destroy the weeds and add fertility to the fields upon which they are pastured; you will find they will furnish you some of your choicest meat; you will find the market ever ready to buy any surplus you may have at prices equal to those paid for sheep on any other markets; you will find that the sheep will do very well in winter on feeds that other stock will not eat—feeds that you have been wasting in other years.

How a Beginning in Sheep May be Made.

The fact that the above statements are being appreciated by some farmers at least is shown by the growing interest that has been manifest in sheep raising during the past year or two. The number of sheep in the Province is greatly on the increase, and the demand for breeding ewes is very strong. This makes it necessary for the farmer to look some distance to find suitable sheep with which to begin at present, though they may be obtained from breeders at fair prices if one but looks long and far enough. Recognizing this difficulty, the Manitoba Sheep Breeders Association last summer conducted sheep sales of breeding ewes at Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg, at which sales good grade ewes were offered at auction in groups of five or six. These sales proved very successful in fulfilling the purpose for which they were intended, that of offering an opportunity to the beginner to secure a start. These sales will be conducted again this fall, and farmers desirous of securing a few sheep as a start will do well to attend one of the sales which will be held in October. Watch for the announcement of them.

In raising any farm animal it is usually advisable for the beginner to start with good grade animals and breed up to pure-breds as he begins to understand that particular type of animal better. In selecting ewes to form the foundation of a flock, the farmer must keep three things in mind. First, that the ewes must possess the indications of good breeders; they must be long, broad and deep of body, good-sized roomy ewes, feminine and docile in appearance about the head and neck, indicating that they will be good, kind mothers.

Second, they will be expected to produce lambs that will be good feeders, and to do this they must be good feeders themselves. They must show a broad, deep chest, a large heart girth and deep hind flanks, a large bright eye and large nostrils, these being indications of good feeding capacity.

Third, that the market requires a purely mutton-producing sheep. The consumer must be kept in mind, and the type of sheep selected that is low-set and thickly-muscled over the entire body, particularly in the

thighs, rump and over the loin and back, a sheep that will not only dress a high percentage of saleable meat but one that will have the greatest possible proportion of this meat in the region of the most desirable and consequently high-priced cuts, namely, over the fore-ribs, back, loin, rump and thighs.

The wool should be given some consideration. It should at least be free from black fibres and coarse straight hair. It should be fine, soft and dense, and the sheep evenly covered with fleece over the entire body. The fleece, however, is more important from the breed standpoint as an indication of breed, type and purity of breeding than from the market standpoint.

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